

Hawaii MARINE ON POINT

HAWAII MARINE D SECTION

OCTOBER 14, 2005



Sgt. Andrew Jones displays one position a Marine may use while firing a weapon in a combat situation, Friday, at Schofield Barracks, during position-shooting training. Gunnery Sgt. John Trotta, staff noncommissioned officer, officer-in-charge, Scout Sniper Basic Course, looks on.

Silent Scope: Marines move on to position training

**Story and Photos By
Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson**
Combat Correspondent

Part two of four

In a combat situation, a Marine may not always be in a good position to take a shot and may need to use unusual objects to prop up or steady their rifle on in order to accurately obtain the shot they need.

Marines going through the Scout Sniper Basic Course learn how to do this effectively during position-shooting training — training that they undergo during their 10-week-long sniper training.

“Well, this part of the training is to prepare the Marines for the more life-like scenarios they would face in combat,” said Sgt. Andrew K. Jones, instructor, Scout Sniper Basic Course. “During combat, the Marines may be in a house or somewhere where the only thing they’ll be near is a table or chairs, so we’re trying to prepare them for those

situations.”

During position-shooting training, Friday, each Marine was required to fire his weapon from positions that ranged from standing to sitting, supporting their weapon by using a table, chair, and other objects such as a sandbag and tripod in order to get an accurate shot.

“The type of firing we’re doing now is going to be very efficient in a real-life situation,” said Lance Cpl. Jeff Kercher, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. “In combat, you’re usually not going to have things like sandbags and tripods to prop up your rifle.

“This training will help a lot in a situation like if we’re in a room and there’s nothing around but a chair or table to use to steady the weapon.”

“Aside from the different position training, Marines in the course will do a night-firing exercise as well, when the sun goes down,” said Jones. “We’ll be using a thermal sight in



Lance Cpl. Nick Peel, rifleman, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, uses two chairs for stability during the Scout Sniper Basic Course’s position-shooting training at Schofield Barracks. This training is to better prepare Marines to use anything they can find in order to make a better shot.

order to see the targets down range.”

The thermal sight picks up heat and shows it through the scope. The sight was used to see how accurate the shooters were and helped them to better see the target.

“We get to use a thermal sight that slides onto the end of our scope,” said Kercher. “It’s nothing like the

sight the instructors will be using to see our shots, but it is a lot better than nothing at all.”

Cpl. Brandon Witter, rifleman, 3/3, MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, said that the night fire is somewhat difficult, due to the lack of light and not knowing where exactly the targets is located.

“Compared to the known-distance day firing course the night course has a lot more things working against you,” said Witter. “But it isn’t the hardest thing we’ve done or are going to do.”

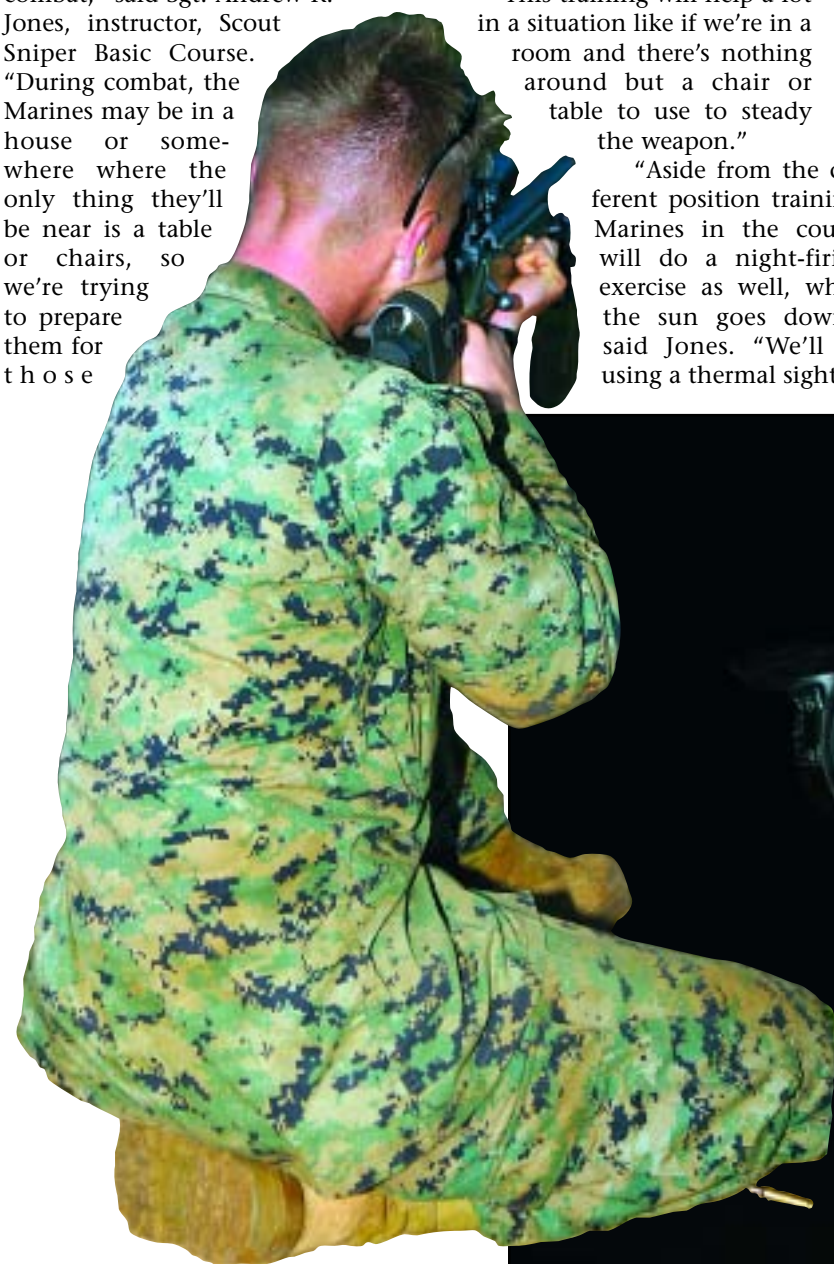
Each Marine was given five rounds to fire at their target during the night-firing course, said Jones, a Kirkland, Wash. native.

“We have little supplies for the night firing so it takes awhile,” said Jones. “We can only have one Marine at a time firing because of the thermal sights.”

Jones, 24, explained that all of the training the Marines are doing now will help them with their final field-training exercise.

“Everything we’re teaching them is to prepare them for the FTX,” said Jones. “They will use all the techniques they are taught in the exercise, so they need to pay attention in all areas of training.”

As Marines in the Scout Sniper Basic Course get closer to the final field exercise they still must endure weeks of individual stalking, group stalking and patrolling in order to be prepared for the one exercise that will put all of the skills taught by their instructors to work for them.



Far Left — A scout sniper student finds comfort and steadiness in a semi-kneeling position.

Left — An instructor with the Scout Sniper Basic Course looks down range with a thermal sight in order to see the targets students will be shooting at during a night-fire course on Friday at Schofield Barracks.